ACT-ccountability

We’ve seen Bong Revilla in handcuffs before. On TV. In movies. Usually as part of a script where the hero gets framed, suffers a bit, then walks free by the final scene. That’s why this moment feels strange — because this time, the handcuffs aren’t props.

Former Senator Bong Revilla was arrested following a warrant issued by the Sandiganbayan over an alleged ₱92.8-million ghost flood control project in Bulacan. A project that, according to prosecutors, existed only on paper while public money quietly vanished. And for once, it wasn’t just a headline that ended with “denied the allegations” and moved on.

Let’s be clear: this isn’t about celebrating someone’s downfall. Skepticism is not cynicism. Questioning powerful figures doesn’t mean we hate the country — it means we actually care about it. Blind faith is easy. Critical thinking takes effort.

Revilla surrendered and claimed he was denied due process. But due process isn’t just for politicians with cameras following them. It’s for ordinary Filipinos who live with broken roads, flooded streets, and unfinished projects because funds were “allocated” but never felt. If justice is real, it should feel uncomfortable — especially for those who’ve lived comfortably for years.

What hits harder is how familiar this story is. Big names. Big money. Big promises. And usually, no real consequences. That’s why many students don’t cheer or cry when arrests like this happen. We pause. We wait. Because history has taught us that accountability in this country loves to arrive late — or not at all.

Yes, Revilla posted bail for the graft charge, while facing detention for malversation. Yes, his co-accused were arrested too. On paper, that sounds like progress. But progress isn’t measured by handcuffs alone. It’s measured by outcomes.

This arrest forces us to ask uncomfortable questions: Is this justice finally catching up, or just another dramatic scene before the credits roll? Are we witnessing accountability, or just the illusion of it?

If we stop paying attention now, we send a message that spectacle is enough. That headlines are enough. That consequences are optional.

When handcuffs stop being props, the audience has a responsibility too. To watch closely. To question loudly. And to remember that demanding answers isn’t negativity — it’s citizenship.

The Impeachment Implosion

Fact: On January 19, 2026, lawyer Andre de Jesus filed the first formal impeachment complaint against President Bongbong Marcos Jr. at the House of Representatives. The complaint lists six grounds, including "betrayal of public trust" for allegedly allowing the ICC to "kidnap" former President Rodrigo Duterte and for supposedly benefiting from billions in "ghost" flood control projects.

Opinion: We've seen this script before, and honestly, it's getting exhausting. It feels like every time we turn on our phones, we're watching two political dynasties use the law as a weapon to settle old scores. To us, this doesn't look like a search for justice; it looks like a high-stakes chess match where we, the Filipino people, are just the pawns.

Fact: Following the first filing, other groups—including the Makabayan bloc and a group led by Chavit Singson—tried to file their own complaints but were turned away because the House Secretary General was "out of the country."

Opinion: Isn't it "convenient" how the doors to accountability suddenly lock when more people show up with receipts? We are tired of the gatekeeping. If the House is supposed to be "the people's house," it shouldn't feel like a private club where only certain people get a seat at the table. We're being fed a narrative that one complaint is "weak" while others are "blocked," leaving us wondering if anyone is actually telling us the whole truth.

Fact: Under the 1987 Constitution, once an impeachment complaint is officially initiated, no other complaint can be filed against the same official for one full year.

Opinion: This "one-year rule" feels less like a safeguard and more like a loophole for the powerful. It’s like a race to see who can file first just to shut the door on everyone else. We shouldn't have to wait another 365 days for answers just because of a technicality. It’s a reminder that while the elite play by the rules they wrote, we are the ones stuck living with the consequences of their "ghost" projects and missing funds.

Call to Action: We need to stop being the audience and start being the jury. Don’t just scroll past the "I-word"—dig into the details and ask why our classrooms are still crumbling while billions are allegedly disappearing into "flood control" that never works. Demand that our representatives prioritize transparency over political loyalty. If we stay silent and let them play their games, we aren't just losing a political battle; we are losing our grip on the future of this nation.

## Swimming Lessons, Anyone?

Congrats, Metro Manila. It’s raining again, and your city is officially a swimming pool. In 2025 alone, over 6,000 families were affected by floods, with millions in damages. And every year, we get the same story: rain comes, streets drown, officials shrug, and citizens swim for their lives.

But let’s be real—this isn’t “bad luck.” This is bad leadership. Drainage systems clogged? Check. Illegal settlements along rivers? Check. Billions spent on flood projects that go nowhere? Double check. We throw money at “solutions,” but when a storm hits, it’s the same result: chaos, destruction, and excuses. Apparently, heavy rain is stronger than billions of pesos and years of planning. Makes sense.

The Pasig River is supposed to be a lifeline. Now it’s basically a clogged bathtub. The Department of Public Works and Highways reported that over 70% of Metro Manila’s drainage is blocked or badly maintained. Think about it: billions wasted, and one downpour and

boom—your house is underwater, your school is closed, your homework is ruined. Meanwhile, someone in a clean office says, “Stay resilient.” Resilient? No. That’s called drowning slowly while someone hands you a soggy umbrella.

Here’s the thing: floods are preventable. Rivers need cleaning, illegal structures relocated, drainage fixed, and urban planning that actually works. Resilience isn’t enough anymore. We don’t want pep talks. We want results. Every peso wasted on lazy planning is a peso that could’ve saved lives. Every ignored warning is a neighborhood lost.

So, what are we waiting for? More flooded streets? More excuses? It’s time to stop pretending that flooding is “normal.” Demand accountability. Demand action. Tell leaders that endurance isn’t bravery—it’s failure. Metro Manila doesn’t need another swimming lesson; it needs a city that actually keeps its citizens dry. If we don’t act now, the water isn’t the only thing rising—the frustration, anger, and chaos will be next.

Wake up, Manila. Or start practicing your strokes.

Burning Prices, Empty Pockets

Every time we go to the market, the numbers on the price tags feel like a personal attack. Rice costs more. Chicken costs more. Vegetables cost more. In 2025, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported **inflation at 6.1%**, the highest in years. And who suffers first? Ordinary families, students juggling allowances, parents skipping meals so their children can eat.

But let me ask you—what kind of country calls this “under control”? When a kilo of rice costs almost double what it did last year, when a bottle of cooking oil could empty a week’s allowance, what are

we controlling, really? Are we controlling prices, or controlling people’s patience until they finally break?

The root of this crisis isn’t magic—it’s policy, neglect, and global pressures we refused to prepare for. The Department of Trade and Industry reports that **basic commodities rose 8–12% this year**. Fuel prices, import costs, and supply chain failures hit hardest those who can afford the least. Every peso stretches thinner, every meal costs more, yet leadership offers statistics instead of solutions.

And still, the government tells us to adjust. Adjust to what? Adjust to survive on hope while inflation devours our daily lives? Adjust to poverty dressed as normalcy? Families shouldn’t have to calculate which child eats today and which one waits. Students shouldn’t have to skip lunch because prices keep climbing. Survival shouldn’t be the standard—stability should.

We need action that actually works. We need transparent policies, stronger support for farmers, a stable supply of essential goods, and economic planning that values people over numbers. Inflation is not just a statistic. It’s a warning: every peso wasted, every policy ignored, every delay costs lives and futures.

So, what will we do? Sit quietly while prices burn through our savings? Or demand accountability, demand solutions, demand a country where families can eat without fear, where students can focus on school instead of survival, and where living isn’t a constant struggle? If we don’t act now, inflation won’t just steal our money—it will steal our future. And one day, when we look back, we’ll ask: why did we let it happen?

CLASS-tastrophic Reality

Fact: Recent 2025–2026 data shows that mental health concerns have officially overtaken academic difficulty as the leading cause of

students dropping out. At the same time, over 30% of Senior High students report "high-level anxiety" tied directly to their grades.

Opinion: We are being raised in a pressure cooker and told to call it "preparation." For years, we've been conditioned to believe that our worth as human beings is printed on a report card. we trade our sleep, our hobbies, and our sanity for a decimal point, only to find out that the higher the grade, the deeper the burnout. It feels less like we are gaining an education and more like we are losing ourselves in a race where the finish line keeps moving.

Fact: To address this, the government enacted the "Basic Education Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotion Act" (RA 12080), mandating mental health centers in schools to fix the severe shortage of guidance counselors.

Opinion: It's about time the system admitted that a "Care Center" is just as important as a computer lab. But a law on paper doesn't fix a culture that celebrates 2:00 AM study sessions as "dedication" rather than a cry for help. We don't just need more offices; we need a curriculum that doesn't treat us like machines. If the system only cares about our mental health after we break, then it has already failed us.

Fact: Research shows that students who base their self-esteem on external rewards like grades are more prone to social phobia and "fixed mindsets" that actually prevent real learning.

Opinion: We have become "fools" chasing numbers instead of knowledge. We are so afraid of a "9" becoming an "8" that we've stopped taking risks. We've traded curiosity for compliance. When we view students as "test scores" instead of people, we are watching the slow collapse of a generation.

Call to Action: Stop equating your GPA with your DNA. We need to demand that our schools prioritize "wellness over workloads" and that our parents understand a "failed" subject isn't a failed life. Speak up when the load is too heavy. We are the ones who will inherit this nation—let's make sure we're healthy enough to actually lead it.

ART-ificial Intelligence

Fact: This year, two Filipino filmmakers made history by reaching the Top 5 of the world’s first AI filmmaking contest. Using tools like Google’s Gemini, they produced Portrait No. 72 out of 3,500 global entries. They claim AI is a "great equalizer" that allows anyone to tell a story without needing a million-peso budget.

Opinion: We’re told that this is a win for Filipino talent, but is it really a win for art? Just because you can type a prompt and generate 1,500 clips doesn't make you a director; it makes you a supervisor of a machine. Art is supposed to be a struggle. It’s the sweat, the messy mistakes, and the human heartbeat that make us feel something. If a machine does the heavy lifting, what are we actually celebrating—the artist’s vision, or the software’s update? Innovation should empower the artist, not delete them.

Fact: In their interview with ANC, the creators argued that AI is just a new tool, like a camera. They spent months "directing" the AI to capture specific emotions, insisting that human "intent" remains the most important part of the process.

Opinion: This sounds like a "READ-iculous" attempt to sugarcoat a bitter reality. If a studio can use one "AI pro" to replace a team of ten real people, do you think they’ll care about "artistic intent"? They’ll do it to save a peso. For students like us dreaming of a creative career, it feels like we’re being replaced before we even get to start. We are training for a future that is being sold to an algorithm. Why build a career when a computer can "simulate" it in seconds?

Fact: AI models are trained by "scraping" millions of movies and paintings created by humans—usually without asking for permission or offering a single cent in compensation.

Opinion: We see the "GHOST-ly" truth behind the tech. It’s not "innovation" if it’s built on theft. AI doesn’t "create" anything; it just rearranges the stolen pieces of things humans have already bled for. A machine can follow a pattern, but it can never understand the "why" behind a story because it has never lived, never loved, and never lost. A computer can mimic a soul, but it can never own one.

Call to Action: Stop being a "scroller" who eats whatever "AI slop" the algorithm feeds you. Demand that movies stay human. Support films made with real cameras, real sets, and real talent. Art belongs to the dreamers, not the processors. Don't let the "Artificial" kill the Intelligence. We need to draw a line in the sand: art belongs to the dreamers, not the processors. If we don’t speak up now, the next Filipino masterpiece won't be made by a person—it will be calculated by a cold, hard machine.